

Society of Mary

An International Religious Congregation

Marists in the United States



February 27, 2026



On February 19th, the Marist School Symphonic Band presented its 2026 Winter Pre-Festival Concert in Young Gym. Directed by Mr. Aaron Schmitt, director of bands, and Mr. Ben Barber, director of foundations bands, the performance served as a midpoint practice run as the ensemble prepares for next month's festival at Universal Orlando, where students will perform for a panel of accomplished band directors and receive ratings and awards. Mrs. Christine Kraemer, director of bands at Beacon Hill Middle School, joined the evening as a guest judge, offering commentary and on-stage feedback to help students refine their performance. As they look ahead to festival adjudication, these musicians embody the communal pursuit of excellence that defines a Marist education.



Ash Wednesday Prayer Service

The Marist School community gathered for the Ash Wednesday Prayer Service to mark the beginning of the Lenten season and enter into this sacred time together in prayer and reflection. This year's liturgy featured student reflections on the Marist pledge "We are Marist" and how to live out the pledge in our daily lives. Each letter of MARIST came to life as a call to intentional discipleship:

- Making others feel welcome
- Accepting and including everyone
- Respecting all people as children of God
- Intervening when someone is being hurt
- Speaking up with courage and kindness
- Taking responsibility for our actions

Rooted in the example of Mary, these commitments remind us that belonging at Marist calls each of us to create a supportive community—wherever we are—where others feel seen, valued for their unique gifts, and fully accepted. A brief moment of silent reflection invited students, faculty, and staff to consider how they are called to live out these promises during Lent and beyond. As ashes were distributed, school community members renewed their commitment to Christ.



Alumni Lenten Retreat

The recently held Alumni Service & Mission Retreat centered on “Living Our Faith in Contemporary Society,” inviting alumni to pause, pray, and reflect on how the Marist Way continues to shape their lives beyond graduation. The evening included an Ash Wednesday prayer service led by Fr. Mark Kenney, S.M., alumni chaplain, with the opportunity to receive ashes, followed by dinner and guided small-group conversation rooted in faith, service, and purposeful leadership. Scott Frank '84 and Mike Coveny '81 helped lead meaningful reflections, and to Fr. Kenny shepherded the alumni in prayer as the Marist community began the Lenten season together.



Marist School's Goizueta Center for Immersive Experience and Design's Immersive Theater

Marist School 8th graders recently stepped into 1893 for a student-led “War of the Currents” Expo exploring the historic rivalry between alternating current (AC) and direct current (DC). Designed by science teacher Ms. Sarah Conn, the immersive experience transformed the theater into the 1893 Chicago World's Fair. The space became a walk-through exposition where students assumed the roles of late 19th-century engineers, journalists, marketing executives, and judges. Grounded in the scientific knowledge and cultural perspectives of the time, they examined how electrical current flows, debated safety concerns, and weighed the tradeoffs that shaped public opinion. Blending science, history, writing, design, and performance, the project invited students to engage both mind and heart. Through creativity, collaboration, and empathy, they explored innovation in context while reflecting Marist's commitment to forming hearts and minds and preparing students to use their gifts in service to others.



Advanced Placement Psychology students also recently stepped inside the human brain this immersive theater. In Mrs. Betsy Holcomb's class, students transformed their study of brain structures into a walk-through, interactive experience called “Brain Games”. Each region of the brain was mapped throughout the space, color-coded, and paired with hands-on challenges connected to real-world function. In one activity, teams explored the role of the corpus callosum by splitting into “left” and “right” hemispheres. One side received images, the other words, and students communicated by walkie-talkie to solve the problem. Across six challenges modeled on a typical day in the life of a Marist student, teams traveled through the “brain” to gather clues, reinforcing that even ordinary tasks require complex, coordinated neural activity. To deepen empathy, each group member adopted a cognitive barrier during the experience, simulating challenges such as ADHD, sensory overload, or depression. As students navigated the space, they developed strategies rooted in collaboration, adaptability, and mutual support. Blending rigorous neuroscience with creativity and compassion, “Brain Games” brought psychology to life and demonstrated that growth happens when we think deeply and support one another.



Celebrating the Life and Legacy of Lt. Col. Neil V. Mesler through a Memorial Scholarship



This week, Dr. Desmon R. Daniel returned to NDP to speak with upper school students. Last on campus in November, “Dr. Dez” continued his conversation with students about personal growth, resilience and self-awareness during times of change. Tailoring his message to a high school audience navigating academic demands and future planning, Dr. Daniel encouraged students to approach challenges with perspective, and to view obstacles as opportunities to learn and grow. His talk, “From Cut to Color: Nurturing Your New Growth – A Journey Through Life’s Challenges,” offered practical insight into developing confidence, both in and out of the classroom.



From Classroom to Career



Forming Informed, Empathetic Citizens



Notre Dame Prep Parent Presentation: “Free to Fly” with Nicole Runyon LMSW



Robotics Shines at States





Duluth, Georgia

2nd Grade Parent Lunch



Elementary Academic Team Regional Tournament



Ash Wednesday



Faculty/Staff Fat Tuesday Lunch



Religion Bee Winners





At NDV, the students are blessed with opportunities that truly develop the whole child.

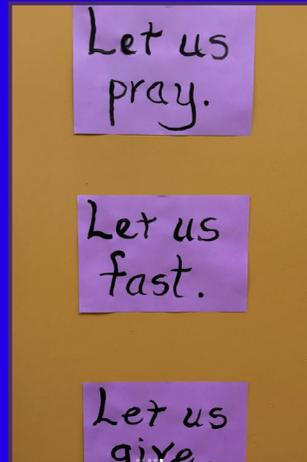
Several of NDV's girls' teams advanced to the CYO soccer championship, and the school community is incredibly proud of their teamwork, determination, and sportsmanship. Athletics help our students grow in confidence, discipline, and leadership.

The 8th grade students recently took a 1-week trip to Washington, DC. Visiting Arlington National Cemetery and standing at Arlington House deepened their understanding of history, service, and civic responsibility.

From the field to our nation's capital, we strive to form well-rounded students who grow academically, spiritually, and socially.



Ash Wednesday





Parroquia Virgen Misionera
(La Perla, Peru)

Ash Wednesday



Stations of the Cross



Ash Wednesday





A Blessed Visit at Balay Pasilungan

The Balay Pasilungan Family was deeply blessed to welcome the new Superior General of the Society of Mary, Fr. Declan Marmion, S.M., accompanied by Balay Pasilungan's founder, Fr. Pat Devlin, S.M.

The boys prepared a simple welcome—handmade handicrafts and drawing cards. Simple gifts, but offered with joy and sincerity, from the heart.

Fr. Declan received them with warmth, and in return offered a special prayer and blessing for the boys, our staff and volunteers, and our mission. Fr. Gil Casio, S.M., the Executive Director, was deeply encouraged by this visit—reminded that we are part of a wider Marist family that continues to walk with Balay Pasilungan.



Ash Wednesday





Matti, Digos, Philippines

Superior General of the Society of Mary Visits Our Lady of Fatima Parish

Our Lady of Fatima Parish warmly welcomed Fr. Declan Marmion, SM, the Superior General of the Society of Mary, on February 21, 2026. Parish staff, volunteers, parish leaders, and the local Lay Marist community gathered joyfully to celebrate his meaningful visit.

The small gathering began with an opening prayer led by Fr. Lionel Mechavez, SM, followed by heartfelt words of welcome from Fr. Larry Sabud, SM. The opening created a warm and comfortable atmosphere, bringing smiles to everyone present. This was followed by a Scripture reading from Luke 1:39-45 (The Visitation), a short reflection, and a symbolic gesture. Mrs. Rowena Pableo, Fundraising Committee president, carried out a message from the parish representative and presented a token. The program then continued with an inspiring message from the Superior General, Fr. Declan Marmion, SM. To wrap up the gathering, Fr. Kevin Medillo, SM, District Superior of Asia, led the final prayer and blessing. The evening concluded with the closing hymn, "I Carry the Word," which everyone sang together in harmony and joy.



Offering Hope: Celebrating World Day of the Sick

On the World Day of the Sick, February 11th, Our Lady of Fatima parents and members of our sick community gathered to attend Holy Mass at 6 a.m. accompanied by their families. Here, they received the Sacrament of Anointing presided by Fr. Lionel Mechavez, SM. The Parish Social Action Ministry (PSAM) offered a song as an expression of spiritual support and encouragement to them. After the song, they served hot arroz caldo that brought comfort and joy to the recipients. This is followed by giving gift packs containing biscuits, milk, and sugar, simple gifts filled with love and caring. Through this, it is revealed that the church is not only a place of prayer but also a society that is united in service and care for one another, especially to the elderly and the sick.

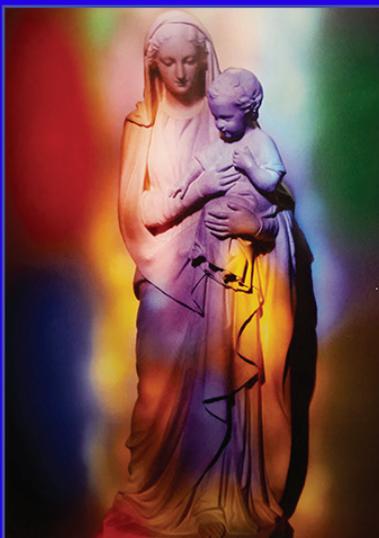




Visitation to the Marist Community & School in Dakar

Fr. Tony Kennedy, SM was in Senegal this week to meet the confreres of the community in Dakar, with Fr. Martin Simna, SM, the District Superior. The Society of Mary has been present in Senegal since 1948 and confreres have made an important contribution to the development of the city over the years. The name of the locality where the parish and first Marist school are, is called "Mariste", and there is also a nearby road called "Route de Pères Maristes".

Among other things, Fr. Kennedy visited the Marist school at Ndiakhirate, Complexe Scolaire des Pères Maristes, which was built in 2017 "to promote dialogue between cultures and religions and to offer an educational community dedicated to academic excellence and the personal development of each pupil". The school currently has 1409 pupils, mostly Muslim, from kindergarten to secondary school.



On February 28th, we remember the 153rd anniversary of the Approbation of Fr. Jean-Claude Colin's Constitutions of 1873.

Fr. Colin was the founder of the Society of Mary – priests and brothers. Born at the close of the 18th century in revolution-torn France, Fr. Colin was convinced that the Blessed Virgin wanted a group of men and women to do her work in the world at a time of turmoil and challenge. In 1836, Fr. Colin obtained from Pope Gregory XVI canonical approbation of the Society of Mary with simple vows, and in the same year Fr. Colin was chosen superior general. Two years before his death he had the joy of seeing the Constitutions of the Society of Mary approved by the Holy See on February 28, 1873. With this inspiration he forged the way for a new family of consecrated religious and laity in the Church - the Marist family.

As we continue to honor Black History Month, we share more history from the Society of Mary Archives. (Prepared by Susan Illis, Society of Mary U.S. Province Archivist)

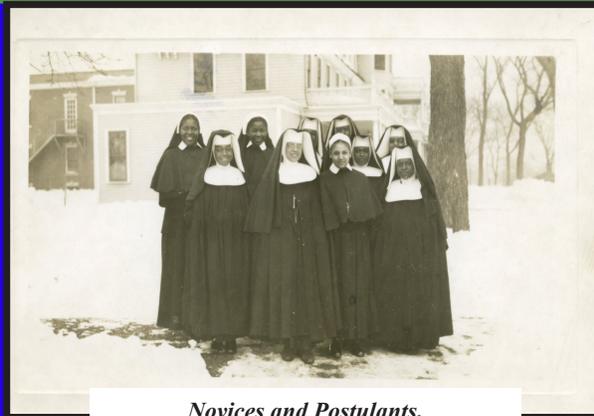
Franciscan Handmaids of the Most Pure Heart of Mary

The Franciscan Handmaids of the Most Pure Heart of Mary is one of three predominantly Black orders of nuns in the United States. Founded in Savannah in 1916 by Rev. Ignatius Lissner and Sister Mary Theodore Williams, the sisters worked primarily in education. Their novitiate neighbored Our Lady of the Elms, the former Marist novitiate on Staten Island. As shown in this 1930 letter, a Marist priest served as chaplain for the sisters, novices, and postulants, with members of the order attending Mass at Our Lady of the Elms when a priest was not available to hold Mass at their novitiate.

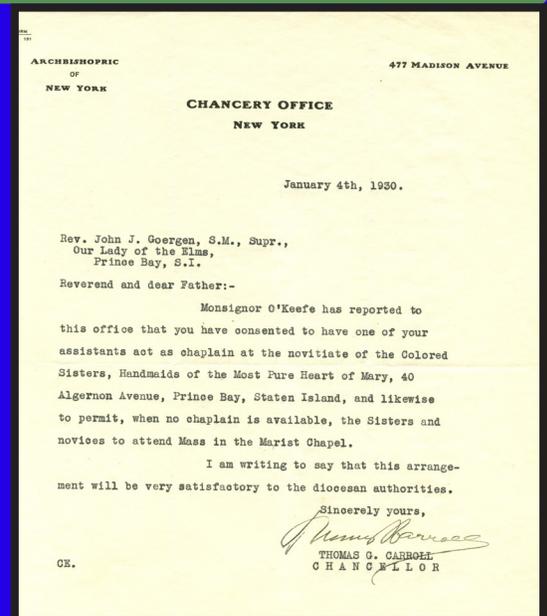
(Disclaimer: The Society of Mary Provincial Archives preserves materials in their original form to maintain historical accuracy, which includes retaining content and language that reflects attitudes and perspectives of the times in which they were created that might be offensive or problematic to users. This language does not reflect the current beliefs of the Society of Mary.)*



Rev. John Goergen, S.M.



Novices and Postulants,
December 31, 1947, Our Lady of the Elms



PRAY WITH POPE LEO XIV
View the Holy Father's monthly prayer intention [HERE](#).

Vocation Corner



Orientation Program

Eight candidate novices recently arrived safe and well in Davao, Philippines. A Mass presided over by Fr. Xavier Sariman, SM, the Novice Master, marked the start of their six-week orientation program. The novices come from Cameroon, Togo, Vietnam, Fiji and Papua New Guinea. Their period of preparation is designed to help them settle in, to become familiar with one another, with Davao and its culture, and with the wider Marist family in the Philippines. Throughout the program, which takes place at the RNDM Sisters' International Formation Centre in Davao, various groups will be accompanying and assisting the Marist candidates: our confreres of the District of Asia, the RNDM Sisters, the SM Sisters, the SMSM Sisters, the FMS Brothers, and several lay collaborators. The Novitiate will begin on March 28th.

Also, the six novices of the current novitiate are preparing for first profession, which will take place on March 25th at St. Michael the Archangel Quasi Parish in Eden, Davao. The two groups are pictured here together, along with their formators, Frs. Xavier Sariman and Thilo Saft.



Visit of Superior General to St. Peter Chanel Formation House

With great joy and gratitude, the St. Peter Chanel Formation House community welcomed Fr. Declan Marmion, SM, Superior General of the Society of Mary during his visit to the Philippines. The community of St. Peter Chanel was truly delighted and blessed by his presence. His visit became a meaningful moment of fraternity, reflection, and inspiration as we gathered together in simple yet heartfelt conversation. Through shared stories, laughter, and dialogue, those gathered experienced once again the spirit of Mary that unites us as one family in mission. The community thanks Fr. Declan for his encouragement, wisdom, and pastoral presence, which renewed the commitment to live our vocation with humility, service, and faith. May this encounter continue to strengthen our Marist spirit as we journey together in service to God and His people.





What does “success” look like in discernment?

Religious communities embrace diverse members



**Reflections on Key Elements of Marist Spirituality
by Fr. David Kennerley, SM**

The [article](#) found at the link below is the seventeenth in a series of 20 reflections on Marist Spirituality for educators by Fr. David Kennerley, SM. Fr. Kennerley originally created these reflections for teachers meeting at lunch. The idea was that they would have material to reflect on once a week across the school year. This series of reflections can be useful for any small group or personal reflection interested in deepening their knowledge of key elements of Marist Spirituality.

Fr. Kennerley was formerly Novice Master for the Society of Mary and later as the New Zealand Provincial. He is currently involved in spirituality in Hawke’s Bay, New Zealand.

Part 17: Instruments of Mercy

(Printed with permission from Fr. David Kennerly, SM)



Marist Vocation Prayer

Jesus, Good Shepherd, we ask you to look on this family of Mary, your Mother, with eyes of mercy.

Lord, we ask you to enrich the Marist world with the fire of your Holy Spirit.

May Mary's subtle and delicate presence enable us to breathe her spirit. So that, committed to our own vocation, we will be credible witnesses of your Gospel.

And, renewed and strengthened with the fire of your Spirit, we may help bring to life the seed of a vocation which you have implanted in the hearts of the young.

Enable us to accompany them in the fulfillment of their personal vocation. Lord Jesus, give us vocations according to your heart. Amen.

Jean Claude Colin
– Pray for us.

Oración por las vocaciones Maristas

¡Oh Jesús, Buen Pastor! Dignate a mirar a esta familia de María con tus ojos misericordiosos.

Señor, te pedimos que enriquezcas el mundo marista con el fuego de tu Espíritu Santo.

Que la presencia sutil y delicada de María nos conduzca a respirar su espíritu. Así, comprometidos con nuestra propia vocación, seremos portavoces creíbles de tu Evangelio.

Y, renovados y fortalecidos con el fuego de tu Espíritu, podamos ayudar a dar vida a la semilla de la vocación que has implantado en el corazón de los jóvenes.

Permítenos acompañarles en el cumplimiento de su vocación personal.

¡Oh Jesús, danos vocaciones según tu corazón! Amén.

Padre Juan Claudio Colín, ruega por nosotros.